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Government Should Rethink Need for Yettinahole Project: Scientist

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BENGALURU: The state government has been urged to take an "appropriate sensible decision" with regard to the Yettinahole project and to convene a meeting of all stakeholders to discuss its merits and demerits.

In an open letter, Dr T V Ramachandra, Co-ordinator of Energy and Wetlands Research Group, Centre for Ecological Sciences, Indian Institute of Science, reiterated that the project will lead to water scarcity in Hassan and Mangaluru, and will not benefit Chikkaballapur, Kolar and other districts.

He also criticised the "consistent negative propaganda" by Karnataka Neeravari Nigam Limited (KNNL) and maintained the project was "ecologically disastrous and economically unviable".

Analysing the rainfall pattern of Chikkaballapur and Kolar districts, he said that they "have sufficient amount of (water) yield, which meets the demands in the region". Sustainable cost-effective options such as water harvesting, rejuvenation and restoration of lakes and ponds could be implemented in 24 months for a fraction of the money required for project. He said the Yettinahole catchment has only 9.55 tmcft water and not 24 tmcft as the state has estimated.

Negative Propaganda

Rebutting several claims made by "KNNL and small-time politicians", he said the response to a scientific document regarding the project should have been a scientific dialogue rather than negative pervasive propaganda.

What is the Project

- The project aims to lift 24 tmcft water from Yettinahole, a tributary of Kumaradhara river, and supply it to several districts such as Kolar, Doddballapur, Bengaluru Rural, Tumakuru and Ramanagaram.
- The project is estimated to cost Rs 12,912 crore and has been severely opposed by people of Mangaluru district.
- It will involve construction of eight dams in two phases along the tributary of Kumaradhara, which, in turn, is a tributary of the Nethravathi river.
- Water availability claimed by State - 24 tmcft
- < Water yield computed by IISc scientists - 9.55 tmcft